

Waukegan, IL. - Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) announced Thursday that the city of Waukegan is receiving \$1.4 million to help replace and lower an aging water line lying in Waukegan Harbor. Joining Kirk at the grant announcement was Sandy Baruah, Chief of Staff of the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde and Jack Arnold, EDA representative.

Replacement of the 75-year-old water line allows Waukegan to expand their water capacity, providing the city with resources to expand business and job opportunities along the harbor and throughout the city. But more importantly, replacement of the water line is a critical first step in the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor

"Replacing and lowering of this critical water line begins the process of what will truly unlock Waukegan's economic potential: the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor," said Kirk. Cleanup of the harbor is essential to attracting commercial and recreational investment, as well as increasing the area's appeal to new homeowners and tourists. I thank the EDA for recognizing the economic importance of this harbor to Waukegan and Lake County residents."

According to a study done by the Northeast-Midwest Institute last year, the value of the average Waukegan home will increase by \$53,000 with a clean harbor. Overall, the institute estimates the cleanup will add over \$800 million to Lake County property values.

Many Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) dumped by the now bankrupt Outboard Marine Corporation years ago still contaminate Waukegan Harbor. Although much cleanup was done over the last decade, a significant dredging of the harbor still must be completed to rid the harbor of the remaining PCBs. Congressman Kirk secured \$15 million to help dredge the harbor, but an additional six million is needed to complete the project. -more-

"City officials have made the commitment to revitalize downtown Waukegan," said Kirk. With the future opening of the Genesee Theatre and fine dining establishments moving in, Waukegan's future looks bright. But securing Waukegan's future lies in the cleanup of her harbor. Replacing and lowering the water line is a critical first step. Now let's finish the job and clean our harbor."

The current water line was installed in 1928. Signs are placed adjacent to the water line warning boaters of its presence in shallow waters, and the line is attached to an anchor. Rupture of the water line would cut off water service to the community and surrounding area. Replacing and lowering the water line will not only attract new businesses to the harbor area, but will allow Waukegan to expand businesses to the western part of the city where Lakehurst Mall used to be. Once a contract is awarded, the water line will be replaced within six weeks.